



THOR

Secret Identity: None

Played by: **CHRIS HEMSWORTH**

Powers/Abilities: The Thunder God who wields a hammer called Mjolnir.

Arch Nemesis: Loki

Love Interest: Jane Foster

First Comic/Avengers Appearance: Venus #12 (1951), Avengers #1 (1963).

When we last saw him: "Thor" (2011) — Thor, the son of Odin, was banished from his home world of Asgard for disobeying his father's orders. On Earth, he is stripped of his powers and becomes a mortal. While on Earth, his adopted brother Loki has taken control and plans to start a war and kill Thor. Thor sacrifices himself, thus getting his powers back and able to defeat Loki. During the fight, the portal to Earth is destroyed and Thor is stuck back in Asgard. Before he left, he promised he'd return to see his romanitic interest, Jane Foster.



HAWKEYE

Secret Identity: Clint Barton

Played by: **JEREMY RENNER**

Powers/Abilities: Expert marksman, especially with a bow and arrow. No superpowers.

Love Interest: Wait and see.

First Comic/Avengers Appearance: Tales of Suspense #57 (1964), Avengers Vol. 1 #16 (1965).

When we last saw him: "Thor" (2011) — Only addressed as "Barton," Hawkeye is a S.H.I.E.L.D. sniper who observes a fight between mortal Thor and S.H.I.E.L.D. guards as Thor attempts to get Mjolnir back.

By MATT REINSTETLE | THE LEDGER

It took one phrase. One phrase to make the most hardened comic book fan giddy at the end of "Iron Man".....

'THE AVENGERS INITIATIVE'

What the casual moviegoer didn't know was that the most ambitious comic book film was being set in motion. Four more superhero films, several post-credit teasers and years of hype have led to this weekend.

"The Avengers," Marvel's All-Star superhero team, will hit the big screen in the wee hours of Friday. This film features an impressive collection of stars reprising the roles from their individual superhero films. "The Avengers" first made its comic debut in 1963 and was created by noted comic book writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby.

Here is what you need to know to get up to speed on each of the Avengers.



HULK

Secret Identity: Bruce Banner

Played by: **MARK RUFFALO**

Hulk (voice) by **Lou Ferrigno**.

Powers/Abilities: Ph.D in nuclear physics, when angry he turns into an indestructible green monster with super strength and agility.

Arch Nemesis: Thunderbolt Ross, The Leader, The Abomination.

Love Interest: Betty Ross

First Comic/Avengers Appearance: Incredible Hulk #1 (1962), Avengers #1 (1963).

When we last saw him: "The Incredible Hulk" (2008) — Bruce Banner is still on the run from the government and Thunderbolt Ross. Ross tries the super soldier serum, used to create Captain America, on another soldier to stop the Hulk. It works, but with side effects. The soldier, now power hungry, uses gamma radiation to become The Abomination to defeat Hulk. The Hulk defeats him during a battle in Harlem, N.Y. Bruce is last seen staying off the grid and avoiding Ross.



IRON MAN

Not-So-Secret Identity: Tony Stark

Played by: **ROBERT DOWNEY JR.**

Powers/Abilities: Robotic suit giving the ability to fly and fire various energy blasts and rockets, genius level intellect.

Arch Nemesis: Mandarin, Iron Monger, Justin Hammer.

Love Interest: Pepper Potts.

First Comic/Avengers Appearance: Tales of Suspense #39 (1963), Avengers #1 (1963).

When we last saw him: "Iron Man 2" (2010) — Tony Stark was spiraling out of control after learning that he was slowly being poisoned by his suit's power supply. Nick Fury, his boss, gives him some of his father's plans that included a new power source to save his life. Stark learns that he doesn't have to fight crime alone and defeats Whiplash with the help of War Machine. Fury then tells Stark that he's "unfit" to join the Avengers Initiative.



BLACK WIDOW

Secret Identity: Natasha Romanoff

Played by: **SCARLETT JOHANSSON**

Powers/Abilities: Highly trained spy and martial arts expert.

Love Interest: Wait and see.

First Comic/Avengers Appearance: Tales of Suspense #52 (1964), Avengers #111 (1973)

When we last saw her: "Iron Man 2" (2010) — Romanoff was working undercover for S.H.I.E.L.D. to keep tabs on Tony Stark to see if he was a suitable candidate for The Avengers Initiative. She also assists in trying to stop Whiplash's plans to destroy the Stark Expo in the film's climax. She is seen returning to S.H.I.E.L.D. with Nick Fury.



CAPTAIN AMERICA

Secret Identity: Steve Rogers

Played by: **CHRIS EVANS**

Powers/Abilities: Physically enhanced super soldier who throws a shield made from specialized steel that prevents vibration, expert leader.

Arch Nemesis: The Red Skull.

Love Interest: Peggy Carter (WWII), Sharon Carter (Present, in comic books).

First Comic Avengers Appearance: Captain America Comics #1 (1941), Avengers #4 (1964).

When we last saw him: "Captain America: The First Avenger" (2011) — Steve Rogers, a sickly Brooklyn native, was given the chance to fight in WWII by participating in an experimental super soldier program. He defeated the Red Skull and stopped his plan to bomb major U.S. cities. The Captain pilots the plane into the Arctic to prevent the bombs from going off but was unable to be found. He wakes up in present day New York and is recruited by Nick Fury to join S.H.I.E.L.D.



LOKI THE VILLAIN